

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00
CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 /092 W
-----087972 122327Z /66

R 122149Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6543
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, SHUM, UR, PL
SUBJ: ICFTU BOARD MEETING: PROPOSED COMPLAINTS TO ILO
AGAINST POLAND AND THE USSR
REF: BRUSSELS 8994
1. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION

OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU), WHICH MEETS IN HAMBURG MAY 17 TO 19, WILL HAVE BEFORE IT AN ICFTU SECRETARIAT PROPOSAL TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE ILO AGAINST THE USSR AND POLAND FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE WORKERS' RIGHT TO ORGANIZE (REFTEL). A SECRETARIAT SOURCE, WHO PROVIDED US WITH A TEXT OF THE PROPOSAL, TOLD US THAT IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE ADOPTED.

2. IF THIS HAPPENS, IT WILL MARK A TURNING POINT IN THE ICFTU POSTURE TOWARD EAST EUROPEAN LABOR. AS THE DOCUMENT ITSELF POINTS OUT, THE LAST TIME THE ICFTU LODGED AN ILO COMPLAINT AGAINST THE USSR FOR INFRINGING UNION RIGHTS WAS IN 1954; IN THE CASE OF POLAND, THE LAST SUCH COMPLAINT WAS IN 1956.

3. THE ICFTU HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY SILENT ABOUT EAST EUROPEAN PROBLEMS IN THE PAST TWO DECADES, BUT FOR THE MOST PART IT CONFINED ITSELF TO ITS OWN VERSION OF "QUIET DIPLOMACY." WHY, THEN, TAKE FORMAL ACTION THROUGH THE ILO COMPLAINT ROUTE NOW? BECAUSE, SAYS THE DOCUMENT, IN EASTERN EUROPE "MORE AND MORE GROUPS OF WORKERS ARE STRIVING TO CAST OFF THE YOKE OF THE OFFICIAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS, AND AT THEIR OWN RISK, TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THEIR COUNTRIES' AUTHORITIES TO THEIR PROBLEMS BUT ALSO THAT OF WORLD OPINION."

4. THE DOCUMENT GOES INTO SOME DETAIL ABOUT RECENT LABOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE IMPORTANT CHANGE, ACCORDING TO THE SECRETARIAT PAPER, IS THAT ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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PREVIOUS STRIKES AND OTHER PROTEST ACTION BY SOVIET WORKERS WERE NOT FOLLOWED UP BY CREATION OF UNIONS, IN THE PAST YEAR "SMALL, INDEPENDENT GROUPS OF WORKERS" HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED. IN JANUARY 1978, A MINER, V. A. KLEBANOV, AND OTHER WORKERS, TECHNICIANS, AND ENGINEERS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO FORM A FREE TRADE UNION, AND THEN ON FEBRUARY 1 ADDRESSED AN APPEAL TO THE ILO AND TO WESTERN LABOR UNIONS TO "RECOGNIZE OUR FREE TRADE UNION," THE ICFTU PAPER POINTS OUT.

5. THE ILO DID NOT TAKE ACTION ON THE APPEAL FOR RECOGNITION, APPARENTLY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE ILO IS NOT COMPETENT TO GRANT RECOGNITION TO A TRADE UNION, ACCORDING TO THE ICFTU PAPER. THE ILO, THE PAPER ADDS, "COULD PERHAPS HAVE CONSIDERED THIS APPEAL AS A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AS IT CONTAINS SUFFICIENT DETAILS OF REPRESSIVE METHODS USED AGAINST THE WORKERS TO PROVE INFRINGEMENT OF ONE AND EVEN SEVERAL OF THE ILO CONVENTIONS."

6. "THE REPRESSION TO WHICH THESE WORKERS ARE SUBJECTED IS UNQUESTIONABLE, AS IS PROVED BY THE ARREST OF V. KLEBANOV AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP...", THE ICFTU

PAPER CONTINUES. IT PROPOSES THAT THE ICFTU FILE A COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF ILO CONVENTION 87 ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION.

7. THE PAPER'S DOCUMENTATION ON THE LABOR SITUATION IN POLAND IS MUCH THINNER. IT REFERS MAINLY TO "RECENT NEWS" FROM POLAND REGARDING THE FORMATION OF A FREE TRADE UNION "ACTION COMMITTEE" AND THE ARREST OF THREE OF ITS LEADERS. THE SECRETARIAT PROPOSES THAT, AS IN THE CASE OF THE USSR, A COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATION OF CONVENTION 87 BE FILED AGAINST POLAND.

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8. COMMENT: THE PROPOSED ACTION IS SEPARATE AND
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INDEPENDENT FROM THE ILO COMPLAINT FILED BY THE ICFTU'S
SMALL RIVAL, THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (REFTEL
AND SEPTTEL). ASKED WHY THE ICFTU HAS LET THE WCL STEP
OUT AHEAD, A SECRETARIAT SOURCE SAID: "TWO OR THREE
WEEKS MORE DIDN'T MAKE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE--WE WANTED
TO GET THE BACKING OF OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD." HINTON

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